



Promoting Kindergarten Readiness for Dual Language Learners: Evidence-Based Language Models and Transition Strategies

REL Northeast & Islands, REL West, and the
Cross-REL English Learners Working Group
January 30, 2019

Today's agenda

Welcome & introduction

Part 1: Understanding acquisition of a second language during early childhood and implications for practice

Q&A

Part 2: Aligning pre-K and K–3 language learning and teaching

Q&A

Closing and next steps

REL Northeast & Islands and the Cross-REL English Learners Working Group Mission

- Facilitate cross-REL conversations about English Learners (EL) issues relevant to REL work
- Act as a “clearinghouse” on key EL news and updates
- Share REL work on EL topics (research reports, tools, resources, Ask A REL responses, infographics, blogs, tweets, podcasts, etc.) with group members and beyond



English learners across the RELs



Today's goals

- Describe research-based language models for dual language learners in pre-K, with practitioner examples
- Address challenges in alignment between pre-K language models and K–3 language models with a particular focus on the use of home languages

Participants will leave with specific strategies to consider when developing or refining language models for pre-K and strategies to align models between pre-K and K–3 settings.



Meet today's presenters



Linda Espinosa

Professor Emeritus of Early
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Early Childhood Education
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PART 1: UNDERSTANDING ACQUISITION OF A SECOND LANGUAGE DURING EARLY CHILDHOOD AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Linda Espinosa

Who are dual language learners?

Dual language learners (DLLs) are:

- Children aged birth to 5 learning two or more languages at the same time (**simultaneous**)
- Young children learning a second language while continuing to develop their first or home language (**sequential**).
- K–12 term is EL/ELL



Demographic Urgency

Diverse group that is growing—in size and diversity of backgrounds.



- More than **30%** of children enrolled in Head Start live in households where English is not the primary language (ACF, 2015)
- Children speak more than **140** languages
- Increased from **11%** of students in 1980 to **almost 25%** of all students in 2017 (NASEM, 2017); **27%** of all children in U.S. born in DL homes; most speak Spanish, **79-90%**

What does recent science tell us
about the best approaches to
early bilingualism and long-term
school success for DLLs?

Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English

A child is running away from the camera in a vast, golden field under a clear sky. The child is wearing a dark jacket and pants, and has a large, white paper airplane attached to their back. Their arms are raised in a celebratory gesture. The background shows rolling hills and a bright sun.

Promising Futures

The National Academies of
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

Topics addressed in research: Where we have evidence of best practices for DLLs

- Children and adolescents, DLLs/ELs birth to age 21 (pre-K–grade 12)
- Early language development from birth to five; development of English language proficiency in K–12
- School organizational and classroom factors that support educational success
- Specific populations: Children with disabilities, gifted and talented, homeless, migrant, indigenous heritage language learners
- Assessment methods
- Educational workforce from pre-K–grade 12



Strong evidence for...

1. ALL infants, toddlers, preschoolers have **capacity** to learn more than one language and balanced bilingualism carries significant social, linguistic, cognitive, and cultural benefits.
2. Those DLLs with more **balanced bilingual skills** showed greatest advantages.
3. Beginning bilingual exposure **before 3 years of age** leads to best proficiency in English long-term.
4. Children need language exposure from **competent speakers** of that language—importance of good language role models.

Strong evidence for...

5. Language interactions need to be **frequent, responsive to child's interests, expanded and varied** to promote oral language development.
6. Emphasis on **oral language skills** during early childhood education (ECE).
7. **Stronger home language and English skills** at kindergarten entry predicted best school outcomes.
8. **The home language must be explicitly and systematically supported** or it will decline once dual language children are exposed to English.

Strong evidence for...

9. **Specific instructional approaches and strategies**, including scaffolding language to promote English comprehension, are important for bilingual progress.
10. **Frequent assessment**—formative—is essential to program effectiveness. Needs and strengths in both languages need to be assessed.
11. **Families** must be involved in education of DLLs.
12. ECE teachers need **specific training and competencies** to meet needs of DLLs.

Basic principle of best practices for ECE for DLLs

Early proficiency in both children's home languages and English at kindergarten entry is critical to becoming academically proficient in a second language. Use of consistent approaches from PreK to Grade 3 supports ongoing achievement.

Systematic exposure to English and ongoing support of a child's home language is critical.

Example



An example of how one large, multi-lingual school district in California has embraced new research and is implementing a planned approach to effective early education for all students birth to grade three—with a focus on Dual Language Learners:

Fresno Unified School District Language Project

Fresno Language Project

Goal: Improve professional development and training for early learning educators to better support the needs of young dual language learners.

Professional Development Sessions

Participants across early childhood settings and contexts engage in 5 three-hour Saturday professional development sessions and classroom coaching each year.

Training session topics:

- The Value of Linguistic and Cultural Diversity
- Family Engagement
- Personalized Oral Language(s) Learning (POLL)
- Support for Home Language



Personalizing Instruction

(Espinosa, Oliva-Olson, Magruder, 2010)



A continuum of support for dual language learners

What is Personalized Oral Language(s) Learning (POLL)?

- Family languages and interests
- Environmental supports
- Instructional supports



Personalized Oral Language(s) Learning (POLL)

Family Language(s) and Interests Interview

How do we get to know families?

- Where do we begin?
- Family Language(s) and Interests Interview



Child Identifier: _____
Teacher/Classroom Identifier: _____

Family Language(s) and Interests Interview

RESPONDENT FIRST NAME: _____ Date: _____ / _____ / _____
RESPONDENT LAST NAME: _____
CHILD'S FIRST NAME: _____
CHILD'S MIDDLE NAME: _____
CHILD'S LAST NAME: _____
Child's Gender: Boy Girl Child's Date of Birth: _____ / _____ / _____

1. What family members live with you and your child? **SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.** (1) mother, (2) father, (3) siblings, (4) grandparents, (5) aunt/uncle, (6) cousins, (7) others, (10) don't know, (11) refused

2. Primary caregiver means the person who spends the most time with a child. Is your child's primary caregiver (teacher, (1) mother, (2) father, (3) grandmother, (4) grandfather, (5) aunt, (6) uncle, (7) sibling, or (8) someone else (specify _____)? (10) don't know, (11) refused] **SELECT ONLY ONE**

3. What language does the primary caregiver speak most often with child? (primary caregiver means the person who spends the most time with the child) [Include closed-ended response codes as per choice language preference list, other specify, (10) don't know, (11) refused] **SELECT ONLY ONE**

4. What language did your child learn when he or she first began to talk? [Include closed-ended response codes as per choice preference list, other specify, (10) don't know, (11) refused]

5. Can you tell me what language(s) each of the following people in your household speak to your child? [ONLY ASK FOR EACH HOUSEHOLD MEMBER IDENTIFIED IN QUESTION 1]

	Not applicable	(1) Only English	(2) Mostly English, some other language (specify)	(3) Mostly other language (specify), some English	(4) Only other language (specify)	(10) Don't know, (11) refused
a. Mother (or you)						
b. Father (or you)						
c. Grandmother/grandfather						
d. Aunt/uncle						

6. a. For families where a language other than English is spoken in the home:
How important is it to you that your child continue to speak and learn the language spoken in your home?
b. **INVERSE RATING BASED ON RESPONSE GREEN** 1 = not important, 2 = neutral, 3 = important
[Include closed-ended codes (1), (2), (3), (10) don't know, (11) refused, (12) not applicable]

7. What special talents or interests does your child have?
Open-ended: _____
(10) Don't know, (11) Refused

Family Languages and Interests Interview

Talents

Toys, books, outdoors

Friends, family

Interests

Family Languages and Interests Interview

Appendix A

Today's Date: _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year

CHILD'S NAME (first, middle, last): _____

Gender: Boy Girl Child's Date of Birth: _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year

- Who are the members of your family? _____
- How many family members live with you and your child? _____
- Who is the primary caregiver of your child? _____
- What language does the primary caregiver speak most often with child? _____
- What language did your child learn when he or she first began to talk? _____
- Does anyone in your home speak an indigenous language? Yes No Identify: _____
- Can you tell me what language(s) each of the following people in your household speak to your child?

	Only English	Mostly English, some other language (identify)	Mostly other language (identify), some English	Only other language (identify)
Mother (or you)				
Father (or you)				
Older siblings				
Grandmother				
Grandfather				
Aunt/Uncle				
Others, after school, community members				

- What special talents or interests does your child have? _____
- Who does your child play with most often? _____
- What are your aspirations for your child? _____
- What are your expectations for the Transitional Kindergarten year? _____
- Do you have any hobbies or interests that you would like to share with your child's class? _____
- Would you be interested in volunteering in your child's class? _____
 If yes, preferred day and time _____

Family engagement is a process, not an event!

- This process begins from the moment you first meet a family and continues throughout the time their child is in your care.
- There are many ways to continually involve families in your learning community.



Personalized Oral Language(s) Learning (POLL)

Instructional Supports

Interactive/Dialogic reading with DLLs



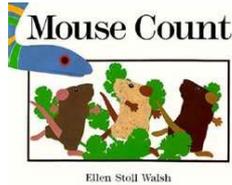
Powerfully promotes essential literacy skills for DLLs:

- Builds oral language: listening, comprehension, vocabulary
- Adapt for DLLs
- Pre-read in home language
- Multiple book readings

Interactive reading adaptations for DLLs

- Small Groups: 3–4 students to maximize opportunities for all to talk...get the conversation going!
- Use pictures to encourage labeling, discussing personal connections, re-telling of stories...children become story tellers
- All of children's language attempts in any language are encouraged and praised
- Teachers comment on and expand on children's responses...emphasizing targeted vocabulary

Personalized Oral Language(s) Learning (POLL) Strategies to increase comprehension and vocabulary development for DLLs



“Today mathematicians, we will compare numbers from 1 to 10.”



- Anchor text
- Intentional message
- Songs and chants
- Gestures/visual cues

Look for opportunities for responsive interactions

Across the day—not just during literacy activities!

During small group, center time, and 1-1 interactions

- [Moises video example of teacher letting DLLs “teach” him new vocabulary](#)
- Dual language learners learning new vocabulary from the teacher

Questions

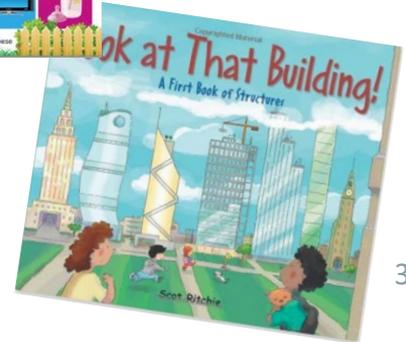
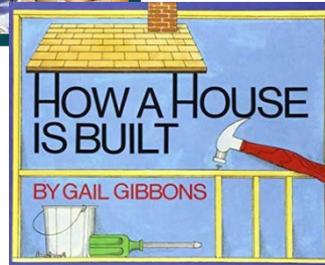
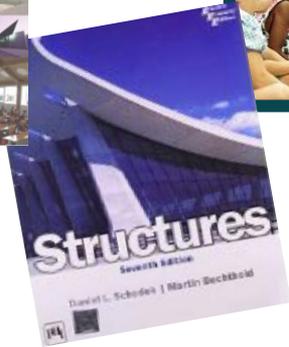
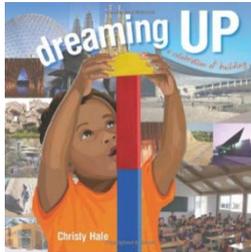


PART 2: ALIGNING PRE-K AND K–3 LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

Whit Hayslip

Anchor text

- Selected to enhance vocabulary development
- Literature selections read repetitively foster vocabulary and concept development through interactive conversations and book reading



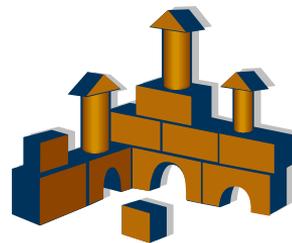
Vocabulary development

Learning new words can be a challenge...

In what ways can we help children make meaning?

- So many words – **be selective and intentional**
- Repetition is key
- Words represent concepts – abstract and arbitrary
- Easier → new word + **known** concept: DLLs
- Harder → new word + **new** concept

blocks
building
enormous



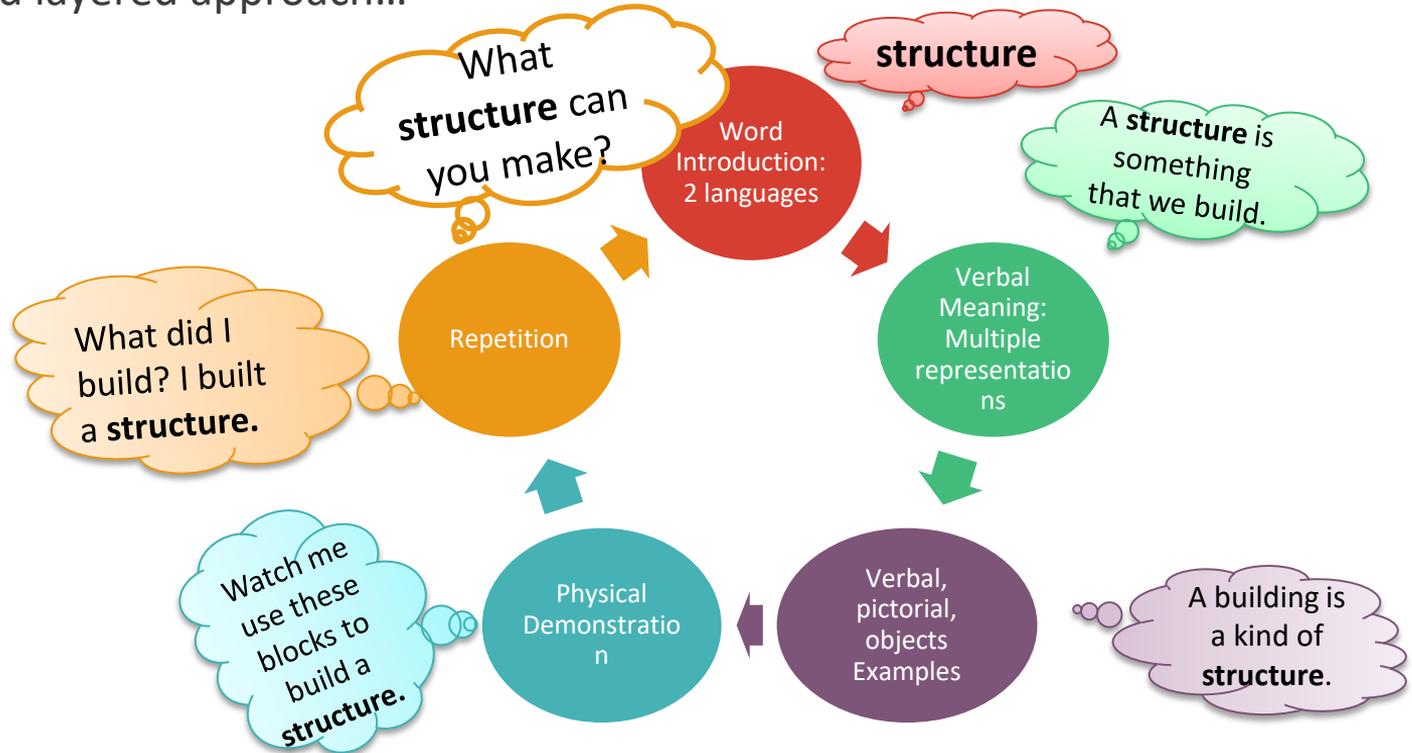
massive
tower



construct
tall
sturdy

Vocabulary learning is incremental

Teaching concepts and new words is never a one time experience, rather a connected and layered approach...



Creating an intentional message enhances vocabulary development

Embedded with content vocabulary, this written message sets the purpose of each lesson

Today, we are going to observe and build a structure.

Using songs/chants enhance vocabulary development

Academic and content vocabulary are woven into familiar songs and chants to encourage repetition

Build a structure very tall
Build it strong so it won't fall
Build it strong right at the **base**
Add more blocks
It needs more **space**.
Build a structure very tall
Build it strong so it won't fall!

Sung to the "ABC" song

If you think you can **build** it then
you can!
What a **structure**!
If you think you can **build** it
then you can!
What a **structure**!
You can **stack** the blocks up high
It will almost touch the sky
If you think you can **build** it
Then you can!
What a **structure**!

Sung to "If you're happy and you know it"

Using visual cues/gestures enhances vocabulary development

- Physical movements and signals are repeated as specific content vocabulary is introduced to imprint meaning.



Personalized Oral Language(s) Learning (POLL)

Environmental Supports

The What: Culturally and emotionally supportive climates

Use the environment to help children feel safe, accepted, understood, respected, and challenged



The How: Scaffolding support for DLLs

- Labeling
- English and home languages
- Start with physical items
- Color coding



The Daily Schedule: Display it...with visual supports

Include:

- Main activities of the day
- Text in home language and English
- Pictures for each activity
- Times for language of focus

Use it:

- To show and describe what is happening
- To show and describe what comes next
- To show families and visitors the routines
- Involve the children in this process!



Personalized Oral Language(s) Learning (POLL)

Let's see it in action!

Video example: Classroom

Reflection



- Take a few minutes to reflect on the video.
 - What intentional strategies did she use?
- This class was made up of children transitioning from preschool to kindergarten.
 - How could you adapt these strategies for use with younger children?
 - How could you adapt these strategies for use with older children?
- Identify best practices and challenges in your work with young DLLs and their families.
- What do you want to know more about?

obrigado

Dank U

Merci

mahalo

Köszi

спасибо

Grazie

Thank
you

mauruuru

Takk

Gracias

Dziękuję

Děkuju

danke

Kiitos

Questions



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